

# Symposium

## Contemporary Art Conservation



# EAC VISITED

### 20 years later



Hochschule der Künste Bern  
Department der Berner Fachhochschule  
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## 20 Years Later: Contemporary Art Conservation at the HKB

Martina Haidvogel and Martina Pfenninger Lepage

### Biography

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Martina Haidvogel is a lecturer in Conservation of Contemporary Art at the Bern University of the Arts. Prior to this appointment she was Associate Media Conservator at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2011–2019), where she has piloted documentation and preservation initiatives for SFMOMA's Media Arts collection. Martina has lectured and published internationally on media conservation and its implementation within collecting institutions. Her research focuses on cross-disciplinary collaboration practice fostered through digital tools, serving the needs of the art of our time.

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Martina Pfenninger Lepage graduated in Conservation of Modern Materials and Media from the Bern University of the Arts, in 2004. She worked at Documenta 11, at Schaulager in Basel and was Case Researcher and Assistant Co-organizer for the EU-project Inside Installations at the Restaurierungszentrum in Düsseldorf. From 2007 to 2020 she has been Head of the Studio for Contemporary Art Conservation at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She also worked part-time as a conservator for the collection Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21). Since 2021 she is co-leading the program in Conservation of Modern Materials and Media at the Bern University of the Arts. Her research focus lies on installation art and contemporary sculptures.

# (Re)thinking the conservation of contemporary art 30 years on

Hélia Marçal

This paper will address the development of the field of conservation of contemporary art since the first consistent debates on the topic around the 1990s. It focuses on the intersections among disciplines and areas of practice to discuss both the innovations and the limitations of the growing conservation field. Within this discussion, I will address the changing needs for education and critical inquiry in the field, while also exploring the ways in which these were prompted not only by developments in collecting practices but also by an increasing awareness of the subjective position of the conservator. In this sense, I will look at both the disruptive debates and the sustained ambiguities, prompting discussions about our path, where we've been to, and where we are possibly going.

The paper will conclude with perspectives on the future of conservation as one that needs to care not only for objects, but also for the world we are leaving to future generations, interrogating the aims of conservation in a society of growing inequality.

## Biography

Dr. Hélia Marçal is a lecturer, researcher, and conservator based in London. She is Lecturer in Art, Materials, and Technology at University College London's Department of History of Art and a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History (NOVA University Lisbon). She worked as a Fellow in Contemporary Art Conservation and Research of the Andrew W. Mellon funded research project "Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum" at Tate (2018–2020) and has been the Coordinator of the Working Group on Theory, History, and Ethics of Conservation of the International Council of Museums' Committee for Conservation since 2016. She has published various articles and book chapters on conservation theory and ethics, conservation of time-based media and performance art, embodied memories and the body-archive, and participation and stewardship of cultural heritage, having been awarded the Taylor & Francis and ICON Outstanding Contribution Award in 2017. She co-edited a Special Issue on Portuguese Performance Art (Revista de Historia da Arte) in 2016 and a book on Archival Practices in the Performing Arts (Coimbra University Press) in 2020. Her recent book projects explore posthuman ethics and activist practices in museums.

# Contemporary Art Conservation in the Netherlands: Looking Back

Sanneke Stigter and Ijsbrand Hummelen

This is a proposal for a presentation in the form of an interview between one of the protagonists of contemporary art conservation in the Netherlands and a trained contemporary art conservator from the first hour, revealing the history of the development of contemporary art conservation in the Netherlands against a micropolitical background.

An overview. In 1998 it became possible to choose 'Modern Art' as a specialization in conservation as part of the training programme in Conservation of Paintings and Painted Objects at the SRAL in Maastricht. This 5-year post-academic programme was one of the achievements resulting from the national research project Modern Art Conservation (1995-1997), culminating in the seminal international symposium Modern Art: Who Cares? The set-up of this research project and symposium was completely new at the time: curators and conservators were working together in the field alongside both chemists and philosophers to tackle the issues at stake in contemporary artworks. An approach that would come close to what later has been coined a field lab. This holistic approach in conservation, forming the basis for the decision-making model that was also presented during the symposium – by now a specialisation-wide approach – has a long history in the development of the art conservation discipline in the Netherlands, with key players at the Central Research Laboratory for Objects of Art and Science in Amsterdam (CL). With history, chemistry and conservation practice as its traditional pillars, CL's art historian Ernst van de Wetering started looking at art objects from a much wider angle involving specialists from different fields. It is Van de Wetering who first drafted the decision-making model for conservation. Oddly enough, at around the same time the first national conservation training programme was established in 1978, alongside the CL rather than as part of it and with a strictly material based focus. Art with capital "A"

## Biography

Ijsbrand Hummelen is Senior Research Conservator at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) since 1992. Trained as a conservator/restorer at the Central Laboratory for Objects of Art and Science Amsterdam, the Swiss Institute for Art Research, Zürich and the Istituto Centrale per il Restauro, Rome. He was head of the Department Color and Material Research at the post graduate Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht and founding director of the former Foundation Collective Conservation Studio in Amsterdam. He was one of the founding partners of the EU projects Modern Art Who Cares? and the INCCA network and contributor in the programs and the content of numerous national and international research projects on conservation of modern and contemporary art. He teaches in several national and international university programs. His research focuses on theory and strategies of conservation of contemporary art, decision-making, technical mediation and materiality in artists' and conservation practices and the relationship between theory and practice in conservation.

Sanneke Stigter is Assistant Professor Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage and specialized in Contemporary Art, Oral History and Auto-ethnography at the University of Amsterdam. Trained as art historian and conservator (cum laude), her focus is on museum practice, artist involvement and new conservation strategies, using her previous experience as head of conservation of contemporary art and modern sculpture at the Kröller-Müller Museum, amongst

was not addressed and paintings were excluded from the programme. Some 10 years later, in 1990, a new independent training programme started at the SRAL, where one could specialise in easel paintings and historic interiors, with modern art becoming the third specialisation eight years later, then still including paintings. Then the two Dutch training programmes merged into the University of Amsterdam in 2006. After the second year, the specialisation Modern and Contemporary Art let go of the focus on paintings, which became part of the specialisation in Paintings. This allowed for a more profound attention to media art, plastics and artist participation. Meanwhile, the entire programme, comprising a two-year MA-programme and an additional two-year Advanced Professional Programme, is more prominently designed around these three pillars for contemporary art, closely following the developments in contemporary art production and contemporary art conservation research. Although most alumni are working in the field, museums in the Netherlands are still lagging behind in staff conservators. This is a challenging situation for the conservation of contemporary art, as new artforms are getting increasingly complex, requiring a collaborative research and learning approach across institutional boundaries and the field of contemporary art.

others. She has been partner in seminal NWO and EU-projects (e.g. Inside Installations, NeCCAR, NACCA); was PI for two NWO-KIEM projects on interviews and reflexive practice, currently is of a follow-up in a NICAS project. She is KNAW-Comenius Fellow and IIC Fellow, and holds a scientist residency in STUDIOTOPIA. She is PhD-supervisor, reviewer and editor, and has published >90 papers/chapters/books, most as single and first author. She has an extensive international network and feels strongly about societal relevance, being steering committee member of INCCA and SBMK, and Chair of the Boards of the ICOM-CC Fund and Alumni Network Conservation and Restoration and Managing Director of the Interviews in Conservation Initiative.

# Development of the field of contemporary art conservation in Europe and the US

Christine Frohnert

This lecture will focus on the development of the field of contemporary art conservation within the timeframe of roughly the last 25 years in both Europe and the US. Key developments will be discussed within this timeline to highlight foci, strengths, approaches, advances, and potential future challenges. The importance of collaborative research to develop new methodologies will be addressed as well as an overview of current and future job opportunities in the field of contemporary art conservation. Emphasis will be given on how these different perspectives have shaped teaching and training opportunities and how graduates specializing in contemporary art conservation are serving the field.

The lecture will conclude with an outlook of potential future developments that may have an impact on the conceptual framework of contemporary art conservation. What are the future materials, technologies or entirely intangible aspects that will keep challenging our field as a whole? What are the skills – hard and soft – that contemporary art conservators already offer and what may they have to add to the field in the future?

The author of this lecture is a 2003 graduate of the Modern Materials and Media Conservation Program at the Bern University of the Arts, who has since then worked in Europe as a museum conservator and in the US in private practice, education and training and as a consulting conservator for museums and private collections.

## Biography

Since 2012, Christine Frohnert has been a partner of bek&frohnert LLC. She is also a Research Scholar and coordinator of the first Time-based Media Conservation Program in the US at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. She was the inaugural Judith Praska Distinguished Visiting Professor teaching a seminar course Art with a Plug – The Conservation of Artworks containing Motion, Sound, Light, Moving Images and Interactivity in fall of 2012. Christine continued to teach TBM conservation foundation classes, organized workshops and co-organized the conference It's About Time. Christine was the chair (2008–2012) of the Electronic Media Group at the American Institute for Conservation and initiated the conference series TechFocus. She held the position of Chief Conservator at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany, from 2000–2005. Building on her original training as a painting and sculpture conservator, Christine graduated from the Conservation of Modern Materials and Media Program at the University of Arts, Berne, Switzerland (2003). *Historia da Arte* in 2016 and a book on Archival Practices in the Performing Arts (Coimbra University Press) in 2020. Her recent book projects explore posthuman ethics and activist practices in museums.

# Focus on Sustainability, Collaboration, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Conservation Education

Glenn Wharton

In recent years the field of cultural heritage conservation has expanded to recognize the concerns of artists and stakeholder communities in research and decision making. It has also recognized the importance of integrating environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability into conservation processes. The UCLA/Getty Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage has embraced these changes by redrafting its mission statement and adopting core values of collaboration, sustainability, and diversity, equity & inclusion. It also works to prepare applicants from underrepresented populations to apply for conservation programs. This presentation will review these changes in the field, and in the UCLA/Getty program.

## Biography

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Glenn Wharton is a Professor of Art History at UCLA and Chair of the UCLA/Getty Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Prior to this appointment he taught in the Museum Studies Program at New York University. His diverse experience in conservation includes serving as Conservation Director for the Japanese Institute for Anatolian Archaeology at Kaman-Kalehöyük, Turkey, and developing MoMA's program in video, performance, and software-based art conservation. He also co-directs the NYU-based Artist Archives Initiative that develops digital information systems for the display and conservation of contemporary art. His PhD dissertation and subsequent book focused on developing a model of participatory engagement in conservation research and practice. He received his PhD in Conservation from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, and his MA in Conservation from the Cooperstown Graduate Program in New York.

# Be Kind Rewind

Agathe Jarczyk

## Biography

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Agathe Jarczyk is the Associate Time-based Media Conservator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Between 2011 and 2019 she was an adjunct professor at the Department of Conservation and Restoration at the University of the Arts in Bern, Switzerland. In 2008 she founded the Studio for Video Conservation and has been working for numerous Swiss and international museums and collections as conservator and consultant.



# Caring for living plants in the museum: An ecosophical perspective

Coline Ardouin and Martina Pfenninger Lepage

In recent decades, environmental issues have become increasingly important in politics, society and science, as they have been in contemporary art. Today, there are numerous contemporary artists working with living plants.

This talk is based on my master's thesis, which examines nine case studies and investigates how sculptures or installations that include living plants can be collected, exhibited and documented. My research focuses on the preservation of the artworks' identity in a museum setting and investigates if the artistic concept might be compromised when it comes to exhibition, storage or loan. Interviews with artists and museum professionals were conducted, in addition to research on the artworks' biographies. Sculptures and installations that include living plants are constantly growing and evolving during and between exhibitions. The special character of these artworks requires thorough documentation.

This talk addresses the challenge of managing living plants in a museum setting through two case studies. The first case is an installation by Michel Blazy consisting of suspended cotton balls in which lentil seeds germinate and grow during the exhibition. To respect the artist's intent, for every new iteration, the old seedlings are replaced by new seeds. The second case is an artwork by Scenocosme. This artist duo explores the sensitivity of plants through their art and seeks participation through our own senses. In this instance, the same plants may be used for each iteration and can be taken care of between exhibitions.

There are several factors to ponder when it comes to acquiring an artwork with living plants. To preserve these ever-evolving works of art, the conservator's role needs to be adapted. Dealing with living plants in a museum setting requires the conservators to cooperate with experts from different fields, such as biologists or botanists. Conservators are also encouraged

## Biography

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Coline Ardouin is a French MA student at the Bern University of the Arts (BUA). She has a background in art history. She started studying conservation of paintings in 2015 and shifted her focus to modern materials and media after a year. As a language-learning enthusiast, she carried out several internships abroad – Germany, Mexico, Switzerland, the Netherlands – in museums and in private conservation studios. The main focus of her research is on caring for living organisms. Because she values human connections, she enjoys conducting artist interviews. Coline's sensitivity to environmental causes has prompted her to reflect on the agency of plants in the field of conservation.

to consider ecosophical concepts and reflect on the notion of plant agency. Scientific research on plant intelligence and communication opens up the consideration of agency to include non-human living organisms in ways such as giving legal rights to plants. In this regard, the adoption of the perspectives of plants might also be valuable in the field of conservation. This would prompt us to embrace a more sensible approach to artworks that include living plants.

# The Role of the Conservator in the Preservation of Public Art

Christine Haynes and Rowan Geiger

This presentation will explore how Preservation Arts, a private conservation studio in the Bay Area, navigates the complex role of conserving public artwork during evolving contemporary conservation ideology and shifting priorities of city art collections. As city officials prioritize community engagement, public art has become a vital part of urban centers, with some cities such as San Francisco implementing public art requirements for new development and building projects. The increase in public art also broadens the types of artwork from memorials and statues to multifaceted installations by emerging contemporary artists. These public art installations can become high value artworks due to growing fame of emerging artists. Simultaneously they often have complex degradation issues related to non-traditional materials and the outdoor environment involving harsh weather, pollution, and public interactions. This degradation often results in reactionary conservation treatments requiring invasive and costly repairs. However, as conservators become involved in public collections, they can begin to mitigate reactionary treatments in favor of regular maintenance and long-term preservation planning.

This presentation aims to highlight the importance of early intervention and the implementation of long-term plans. At times, early involvement can be directly with artists and involve discussions of material choices, fabrication, and functionality. However, in public art, the conservator is often interfacing with city officials and public art commission committees in order to project long term preservation and maintenance plans before the artist is chosen.

Large commissions for public art is an important revenue stream for many contemporary artists in addition to being one of the most direct ways that artists can interact with their communities. As preservation advocates, we can ensure the longevity of these important artworks by building relationships and communication channels with people in the commissioning process.

## Biography

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Rowan Geiger, Director of Preservation Arts and Principal Conservator, holds a Master's Degree in conservation from the Royal College of Art, London and has over 20 years of experience in the field. In addition to three years in studio training at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, she has held staff positions at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Stanford University Libraries, and was Chief Conservator at SFO Museum. Geiger is a peer reviewed Professional Associate of the American Institute for the Conservation of Historical and Artistic Works.

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Christine Haynes is the Associate Objects Conservator at Preservation Arts, a private practice in the Bay Area. She received a Master's of Science in the Conservation of Artistic and Historic Works and a Masters of Arts in the History of Art from the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. She has trained at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Barbara Goldsmith Preservation & Conservation Department at Elmer Holmes Bobst Library at NYU, and the Cleveland Museum of Art. Her research interests focus on modern and contemporary art, especially plastic polymers and composite objects.

Beyond the commissioning process, we must develop lasting relationships with city officials, maintenance workers, fabricators, and artist studios in order to create and implement long-term preservation plans both for the artwork and the associated archival documentation.

Additional challenges of conserving public art will also be addressed such as public safety, VOC compliance, traffic ordinances, and equipment requirements. The conservator must navigate a variety of logistics with experts in many fields, including those that do not have an art or collection management background.

We must also recognize our evolving role as conservators; when to advocate for material preservation and when to prioritize additional stakeholders. Conservation training gives us the tools to consider various values of the artwork while meditating opposing stakeholders in order to develop the best preservation options.



# Panel: Advocacy in Conservation of Contemporary Art

## Moderation

Martina Haidvogel, Bern University of the Arts

## Panelists

Nathalie Bäschlin, Museum of Fine Arts Bern  
Carolin Bohmann, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna  
Jim Coddington, Museum of Modern Art (retired)  
Gunnar Heydenreich, Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences (CICS) / Technische Hochschule Köln

## Biography

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Nathalie Bäschlin is chief conservator at the Kunstmuseum Bern and lecturer at Hochschule der Künste Bern. She holds a doctorate from Universität Bern, Studies in the Arts (SINTA) and researches, teaches and publishes on topics of painting technique and conservation/restoration, on the transport of fragile paintings and on the history, theory and ethics of conservation/restoration.

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Carolin Bohmann is professor for Conservation and Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Research focus on conceptions of light in painting, intersection of materiality and conservation theory. Experiences as Conservator of Modern and Contemporary Art at documenta x, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg and Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin. Conception of various conservation-exhibitions and conferences on contemporary and ephemeral art at Hamburger Bahnhof. 2019 Fellowship at IKKM with a Research Project on Questioning Material and Immateriality in Conceptual Art.

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Jim Coddington is a conservator, retired from the Museum of Modern Art as the Agnes Gund Chief Conservator. In addition to his restoration of paintings he has published and lectured on topics including structural restoration of paintings, development of color accurate documentation of art, time-based media conservation, automated texture identification of photo papers, multi-spectral analysis of paintings, and the use of flash

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thermography for paintings. He has also published on the theory and practice of conservation as well as studies of Pollock, de Kooning, Miro, Cezanne and Pissarro.

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Dr. Gunnar Heydenreich is Professor for Conservation of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences (CICS)/ Technische Hochschule Köln. He studied paintings conservation at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Dresden and he gained a Ph.D. from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. From 1995 to 2009 he was head of paintings and contemporary art conservation at the Restaurierungszentrum in Düsseldorf. He was a founding member of the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA) and co-organiser and participant of several European research projects on the conservation and presentation of contemporary art: Inside Installations, PRACTICs, NeCCAR, and NACCA. He is head of the Cranach Digital Archive (lucascranach.org) at the Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf.

## Caught between Protection and Exposure: Entropy and Exhibition-making in the Age of Climate Crisis

Rebecca Lewin

Art galleries have long been established as places of refuge where objects and people can shelter from the vicissitudes of weather, time, and aging. The apparently neutral aesthetic of the white cube has been accompanied by a less-often acknowledged and invisible infrastructure – the controlled ‘museum conditions’ that maintain temperature and humidity, delaying entropy and displacing the environmental cost of creating this effect. In this lecture, curator Rebecca Lewin discusses different courses of action taken by artists and institutions to address the positive and negative impacts of exhibition-making when acknowledging greater sense of responsibility in the age of climate crisis.

### Biography

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Rebecca Lewin is Curator, Exhibitions and Design at Serpentine Galleries, London, where she has curated shows that include Formafantasma, Pierre Huyghe, Etel Adnan, DAS INSTITUT, Pascale Marthine Tayou, and Martino Gamper. She has worked on outdoor commissions by Michael Craig-Martin and Bertrand Lavier, the 2018 Serpentine Pavilion by Frida Escobedo, and the 2013 Serpentine Pavilion by Sou Fujimoto. She has also produced independent exhibitions, including ‘A Partition’ at Cell Project Space (2016), ‘The Palace of Green Porcelain’ at Breese Little Gallery (2013) and ‘Pertaining to things natural...’ at the Chelsea Physic Garden (2012). She has contributed essays and interviews for catalogues published by Serpentine and Koenig, Phaidon, Semiose, Mousse, TL Mag and La Casa Encendida.

# Evolving concepts of care and prevention for contemporary art collections in contemporary institutions

Aga Wielocha and Christel Pesme

The advent of contemporary art forms and artistic practices, and their inclusion in the museum collections stimulated the rethinking of the institutional practice of conservation, as well as its tools and approaches. It also led to the development of new areas within the field of conservation, such as conservation of modern materials, installation art or time-based media, and consequently to changes in the structure of and skill-sets within conservation departments of institutions that collect contemporary art. This paper will look at preventive conservation, a specialism rarely discussed in the context of contemporary art, and analyse how the inherent features of the new art forms together with the developments in contemporary art conservation may shift its scope.

This analysis, performed in the context of the present-day museum model which favours interpretation of and access to collectibles employs a twofold approach. Firstly, it looks at how traditional preventive conservation can adjust its approaches to accommodate the nature of contemporary artworks. It implies that decision making, as well as documentation and implementation of those decisions in the context of contemporary art collections require proper articulation of various spatial and temporal scales into a holistic yet flexible frame. It suggests that frameworks from heritage management, such as value based approach or significance assessment to collection care strategies, which rely on the systemic integration of multiple perspectives on the inherent contextuality, heterogeneity and complexity of any cultural sites, might support or even lead preventive conservation of contemporary art collections.

## Biography

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Aga Wielocha is a collection care professional and a researcher specialised in contemporary art. Currently, she holds a position of Conservator, Preventive at M+ in Hong Kong. She holds a PhD from the University of Amsterdam. Her doctoral research carried out within the program 'New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art' (NACCA), situated at the crossroads of art history and theory, conservation, museology and heritage studies, is focused on the lives and futures of contemporary art in institutional collections, particularly on works which are variable and unfold over time.

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Christel Pesme is a conservator, researcher and collection care specialist. From 2017 to 2020 she worked as Senior Conservator at M+, Hong Kong. Trained in paper conservation, she became fascinated in understanding interactions between light and collection materials while working in the Preventive Conservation section of the Science Department at the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI). She has since been extensively working, teaching and publishing on methods to monitor appearance of various materials and to assess light sensitivity of collection items and on approaches to mitigate light risk on collection. Currently she is focusing her efforts on developing practical ways to implement more sustainable collection care practices.

Secondly, it ponders over the potential expansion of the concept of preventive conservation for contemporary art collections. Expanded preventive conservation embraces documentation, acknowledged as one of the main tools for securing perpetuation of inherently changeable contemporary art forms, as well as strategies from the field of archival sciences and digital preservation.

Those two perspectives are presented as a dialog between two conservation professionals with different backgrounds and expertise who have worked together on shaping preventive strategies in the context of an emerging contemporary art institution.

# A rare animal? Being a contemporary art conservator in Special Collections and Archives

Rachel Rivenc and Melissa Huddleston

The Getty Research Institute (GRI) is home to diverse collections that include rare books, rare photographs, prints and drawings, films and videos, 20th century multiples, and vast archives. The archives comprise of dealers archives, prominent scholars, curators and art historians archives, as well as artists archives. The GRI collections are also rich in archives of feminist and queer avant-garde artists, which often include performance relics and performance related paraphernalia. Works of art are often found in artists archives, included intentionally or sometimes “accidentally” left there, and discovered after the acquisition. The range of materials and media reflects the experimental approaches that have characterized contemporary artists in the last decades of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, and is not unexpected. Unlike in a Museum setting, however, works of art in the GRI’s archives and special collections are collected primarily as research objects, meant to be studied as vehicles of information rather than displayed for their unique aesthetic qualities. This influences heavily the approach to their conservation. Other unique characteristics of this mode of collecting is the large volume of collections that the GRI acquires. As a result, it can be difficult to lavish the same amount of care and attention on any one single object, while there is also often much less information available on objects that are part of a large archive than when collected individually.

In these conditions what are the main skills required from the conservators entrusted with the care of these objects? The skills traditionally provided by conservation training remain crucial: in-depth knowledge of material properties and of a wide variety of treatment materials and methodology; an acute awareness of ethics and understanding of the philosophical and sociological concepts involved in conservation decision

## Biography

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Dr Rachel Rivenc is the Head of Conservation and Preservation at the Getty Research Institute (GRI). Prior to that she worked at the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) as part of the Modern and Contemporary Art Research Initiative where she researched the materials and processes used by contemporary artists and the conservation challenges that they pose. She was the coordinator for the Modern Materials and Contemporary Art working group of ICOM-CC for 6 years and currently sits on the steering committee of the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA). Rachel holds a master’s degree in paintings conservation from Paris I-Sorbonne and a PhD from the Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines.

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Melissa Huddleston is Assistant Conservator at the Getty Research Institute Conservation and Preservation Department. She holds a BA in Studio Art from Western Washington University and has worked in museum collection care since 2007. She specializes in treatment, housing, and installation solutions for Modern and Contemporary archival materials.

making. However, other skills are just as essential – yet seem to fall more under the umbrella of interpersonal skills and personal traits: curiosity and open-mindedness, a detective mindset, a diplomatic and collaborative temperament, excellent problem solving, out of the box thinking, the ability to prioritize, obstinacy yet the ability to let go. Can these qualities be cultivated through experience? This presentation will argue they can, and explore these questions through examples taken from the GRI collections including Fluxus kinetic and light-based objects, performance relics such as a vial of blood and a dress with thirteen breast, and Dieter Roth’s “Urine Book”.

# New Ways of Working: Thoughts and Observations of an Emerging Time-Based Media Conservator

Rea Grammatikopoulou

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen has a vast collection of single or multichannel video and audio installations, as well as some software-based artworks. My presence as a time-based media conservator combined with the rising amount of complex digital artworks being accessioned are re-shaping the institutional approach to the workflows of time-based media art acquisitions. It could be argued that this shift is happening organically, driven by the demands of the artworks.

For example, Simon Denny's Amazon Worker Cage<sup>1</sup>, acquired in January 2021, consists of a massive cage and an iOS augmented reality application. Visitors can use their iPad or iPhone to experience a bird, tweeting and flying around in the cage. During the acquisition process, the issue of acquiring and preserving the app emerged and after presenting our unresolved questions to the head of collections, we decided to reach out to the artist. This was the first time that conservation staff got actively involved in the acquisition conversation. Simon Denny was open to discuss our questions and shed light onto technical and contextual issues regarding the future of the application component of his artwork.

An example where this kind of communication channel was not established between artist and conservation staff is that of Reinhard Mucha's monumental installation Das Deutschlandgerät<sup>2</sup>, acquired in 2002 and permanently presented in K21 since then. Part of the installation are videos shown on 15 CRT monitors, as well as speakers, subwoofers, DVD and CD players. Within its exhibition timespan of almost 20 years, the hardware of the artwork has undergone several problem-driven repairs and replacements. This fact has recently inspired the artist to update the equipment

## Biography

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Rea Grammatikopoulou studied Art History and Theory at the Athens School of Fine Arts and did her Master's Degree in Media Conservation (MA) at the Stuttgart State Academy of Fine Arts. During her master's study program, she completed an internship in the Time-based Media Conservation Departments at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and, later on, at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Since September 2020 she has been working as a Trainee Time-based Media Conservator at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf.

and show the videos on flatscreens mounted on the deactivated CRT monitors. Documenting Mucha's intervention on Das Deutschlandgerät acted as an impetus for me to dig into the past of the installation. I came to realise how different the approach to time-based media art was 20 years ago: The documentation material from 2002 was very limited and did not include information such as inventories of the original or replacement hardware, photographs of the equipment, treatment reports and the artist's view on technical obsolescence in the future.

Putting the case studies of Das Deutschlandgerät and Amazon Worker Cage in comparison, it becomes visible that integrating a time-based media conservator in the acquisition workflow helps minimising the discrepancy between artistic intention and materiality in future presentations of artworks and enhances the sense of trust and collaboration on part of the artist towards the museum.

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<sup>1</sup> Original title: *Amazon worker cage patent drawing as virtual Aquatic Warbler cage* (US 9,280,157 B2: "System for transporting personnel within an active workspace", 2016), 2020. Acquired in 2021.

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<sup>2</sup> Original title: *Das Deutschlandgerät. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen*, K21 Ständehaus, Düsseldorf [2002], XLIV Biennale di Venezia, Deutscher Pavillon, Venedig 1990, 1990/2002. Acquired in 2002.

# A framework for the systematic recording of media artworks and their generational changes at the Kunsthaus Zürich

Eleonore Bernard and Tony Kranz

The diversity of media artworks in terms of artistic appearance and technical variety, and with it the inevitable obsolescence of formats and devices, poses a recurring challenge for their long-term preservation.

In the last few years, the conservation department of the Kunsthaus Zürich has focused on the development of tools and in-house structures for both long-term preservation and accessibility as well as use of its media art collection. In close collaboration with the database specialist, the registrars, and the research assistant of the Collection of Prints and Drawings, a uniform recording structure for media artworks and multi-part installations was created and implemented. The database is now acting as a central management system for collection maintenance across departments.

The main goal during this process was to develop a (conceptual) framework for a systematic mapping of the complexity of works that have to be stored in different locations and whose components are subject to unavoidable changes e.g. of status. An important, however, difficult requirement was to build on existing structures, to adapt and improve the database to the interdepartmental needs. One question that emerged during the process was whether the increasing volume of database records was creating a confusing image of the artworks. A main concern was therefore the clear distinction between conceptual recording of components from an art historical point of view and the necessary documentation of the artwork's change, e.g. ever-increasing elements such as data carriers or technical devices. This was solved by introducing an additional recording level, so that on one side the necessary work components for the artwork are registered, while on another level, the generational course of the existing media components can be mapped. The latest achievement of this interdis-

## Biography

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Entrusted with the development of media conservation at the Kunsthaus Zürich as a project collaborator since 2017, Eléonore Bernard has been responsible for the conservation of the media arts collection as a permanent conservator at the Kunsthaus Zürich since the beginning of 2020. She holds a Master of Arts from the Bern University of the Arts in conservation and restoration with a specialization in modern materials and media since the beginning of 2020.

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Tony Kranz has been working as a technician at the Kunsthaus Zurich since 2020 and is a specialist in the realisation of audiovisual artworks. After completing his bachelor's degree in film and video at the Merz Akademie in Stuttgart, he worked for many years at the Gallery Peter Kilchmann in Zurich, supporting various video artists such as Francis Alÿs, Adrian Paci or Zilla Leutenegger in the installation of video art.

ciplinary working group is the further development of a database rider for the recording of technical devices, which was designed in close collaboration with the audio-visual technician of the Kunsthaus Zurich. The central questions, besides where and how to record the technical devices in the database, was whether the recording of artwork-dedicated equipment should differ from the recording of the general pool of technical devices. The necessity of recording technical upgrades and restorative interventions was confirmed in the course of many discussions and integrated into the database rider. Due to the relocation of the collection, there was an urgency to find a quick and sustainable solution to these questions, another, not to be underestimated, challenge.

Based on a case study from the media arts collection, this presentation provides insight into the media preservation workflows at the Kunsthaus Zürich and briefly introduces the solutions developed for the internal documentation of complex, multipart media installations, highlighting the importance of cross-departmental strategies.



# Building a Media Art Collection – Challenges and Strategies

Sabine Himmelsbach and Claudia Röck

In 2011, exactly 10 years ago, HEK (House of Electronic Arts) was founded in Basel. The institution is distinguished by its unique collection, which focuses on “born-digital art,” art that was created and located in the digital medium and often has no physical manifestation. The focus is on software and net-based works, which rarely find their way into public collections, as their preservation requires innovative strategies and a network of different actors – from conservators to programmers. The artworks in the collection show the historical development of media art in Switzerland in a comprehensible way. At the same time, their integration into a collection ensures that pivotal digital art works are preserved for the future. The presentation will focus on two aspects – the curatorial decisions and processes involved in building the collection and the conservation challenges that need to be faced in preserving complex media-based works – involving infrastructure and external professional networks.

The born-digital art HEK collects can be described as a specific form of contemporary art. Often, art works are interactive and process based. Some works are still active, others are only existing as project archives which is due to the rapid technological development. Some artworks are purely digital, others have physical components, including specific hardware. Some artworks are networked, others are contained. Certain artworks are commenting the use of technology, some are playful.

Claudia Roeck, the time-based media conservator at HEK and educated at HKB will talk about the skill sets she needed to handle HEK’s collection and show the links between her own career and the evolvement of HEK’s conservation activities. In her part she will discuss the methods and skill sets she had learnt at conservation studies and the tension between these methods and the preservation of time-based media installations at HEK.

## Biography

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Since 2012, Sabine Himmelsbach has been director of HEK (House of Electronic Arts) in Basel. After studying art history in Munich, she worked for galleries in Munich and Vienna from 1993–1996 and later became project manager for exhibitions and conferences for the Steirischer Herbst Festival in Graz, Austria. In 1999 she became exhibition director at the ZKM | Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe. From 2005–2011 she was the artistic director of the Edith-Russ-House for Media Art in Oldenburg, Germany. In 2011 she curated “gateways. Art and Networked Culture” for the Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn as part of the European Capital of Culture Tallinn 2011 program. Her exhibitions at HEK in Basel include Ryoji Ikeda (2014), Poetics and Politics of Data (2015), Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: Preabsence (2016), unREAL (2017), Lynn Hershman Leeson: Anti-Bodies, Eco-Visionaries (2018), Entangled Realities. Living with Artificial Intelligence (2019), Making FASHION Sense and Real Feelings. Emotion and Technology (2020). As a writer and lecturer she is dedicated to topics related to media art and digital culture.

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Claudia Roeck is a time-based media conservator. She is affiliated to the University of Amsterdam, where she pursues a PhD about preservation strategies for software-based artworks. This PhD is part of the EU funded project New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA). She did her practical research at LIMA, an archive and research platform for media art in Amsterdam. Before that she

Sabine Himmelsbach, director of HEK, will speak about the institution’s strategy to build the collection and to keep it alive. She will describe the challenges to make sponsors and politicians aware that the preservation of media artworks is time-consuming, complex and involves constant costs while HEK is still one of the few institutions in Switzerland preserving digital-born heritage.

worked as an assistant time-based media conservator at Tate mainly with video-based art. From 2019 to 2021 she collaborated on a software preservation project at the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision. Currently she works part-time to preserve the collection of the House of Electronic Arts in Basel.

# Replication and its Role in the Care of Contemporary Artworks

Stephen Huyton and Alexandra Nichols

Increasingly, contemporary artworks require some form of replication (including reprinting, remastering, replacing of components, etc.) as part of the conceptual identity of the artwork or to maintain its ability to be exhibited over time. As part of the Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum project, Tate staff examined artworks that require replication to determine how the museum could better adapt to the evolving lives of these artworks once they enter the collection. The working group examined past replication interventions, held focus groups with internal stakeholders, and discussed the ethics surrounding replication in workshops and conversations with staff at other museums.

As a result of this research project, the working group proposed the formation of a Replication Advisory Group to serve as an inclusive forum where replication activities could be discussed equally amongst conservation, collection management, curatorial and legal representatives. A formal workflow was introduced, providing a process to manage replication interventions and fully document the decision-making process for each replication. Using artworks from the collection as case studies, the authors will describe the function of the Replication Advisory Group and walk participants through the workflow and the forms created to document the process. We will also discuss how curatorial, conservation, and registration teams have adapted their practices for better documentation of these processes and the elements created as a result of them, as well as how these replications should be described to the public.

## Biography

Stephen Huyton is a Collection Registrar at Tate, focusing on lending the collection. Stephen first joined Tate in 2016 as Assistant Collection Registrar, ARTIST ROOMS, working with its international collection of modern and contemporary art. In 2018, Stephen was promoted to Collection Registrar, Research, and lead the collection management strand of the 3-year 'Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum' research project, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Working as part of a multidisciplinary team, this programme of research aims to develop new collection management and conservation models, building the museum's capacity to collect, document and engage with particularly challenging artworks, principally time-based media.

Alexandra Nichols is a Time-Based Media Conservator at Tate, focusing on exhibitions and displays. In 2020 Alex was an embedded researcher in the 'Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum' research project, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Prior to working at Tate, she completed fellowships at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in the conservation of time-based media. Alexandra Nichols holds an M.S. in Art Conservation from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation and a B.A. in Art History from the University of Maryland.

# Caravan Chaos: Collegial Consultation as the Counter Pressure to the Art Market in Private Practice

Carien van Aubel and Joy Bloser

The art market often operates in opposition to established conservation ethical practice, yet in private practice the art market is the driving force of the business. Ethical standards within conservation, however, are largely centered on museum practice. How should the boundaries be set in private practice when the art market is the primary client? In this case study, collegial consultation and consensus emerge as the primary tool to determine how interventive actions in service of the art market can be ethically carried out.

A client found an artwork by Mr. Doodle, Caravan Chaos (2015), for sale on eBay. The artwork was a spray-painted aluminium mobile home measuring 3 x 8m originally sited in a field owned by the eBay sellers and friends of the artist. This piece is unique for Mr. Doodle in his use of spray-paint and outdoor placement, as his typical work consists of continuous scribbles, usually in marker or pen, on pedestrian objects.

After purchasing the work, the client approached me to cut the caravan into 48 panels, and restore them individually in preparation for auction. I was conflicted about the various ethical considerations of the project and found little published to help guide my decision-making. I could not accept the project without first discussing the case and potential ethical boundaries with other colleagues in the field. Through lengthy discussion, collegial consensus became the ethical barometer for how to best proceed with the treatment. Can cutting up an artwork and restoring it's painted surface to sell at auction be ethical?

This paper explores the motivating questions we ask each other as conservators and the ongoing conversations we have throughout the course of a treatment to gauge success and failure to understand wheth-

## Biography

Carien van Aubel is an independent conservator specialised in modern and contemporary art in both the Netherlands and United Kingdom as part of the MODCON Collective. She also serves as project conservator in the sculpture and installation department for the International Loans Program at Tate. She received her postgraduate training in conservation at the University of Amsterdam and holds an MSc in Chemistry. Her research focuses on the identification of plastics used in artworks. In her work as a conservation researcher at the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum she developed a method for identifying plastics in museum collections without the use of analytical techniques. She carried this research over into her role as researcher on 'Project Plastic', a collaboration between the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) and the Netherlands Institute for Conservation, Art and Science (NICAS), to develop the Plastic Identification Tool and Plastic Identification Workshops.

Joy Bloser is the assistant objects conservator at The Menil Collection in Houston, TX and specialises in modern and contemporary materials. She was formerly the assistant conservator for public outreach at the MFA Boston, and the David Booth fellow in sculpture conservation at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. She earned her MS in Conservation and MA in Art History from The Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, and a BA in Chinese Language and Art History from Middlebury College. Prior to working in conservation, she was the assistant curator at UCCA

er a reflective, community-based practice can serve as a modern code of ethics for private practice.

Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing and VIP relations manager for Art Basel Hong Kong. She produces translations of art-based Chinese texts and is a contributing translator to LEAP Magazine and Yishu Journal. She currently serves as the ECPN liaison for AIC's Contemporary Art Network (CAN!).

## The Long-term Artist-Conservator Engagement: Conservation and De-creation in the Artist's Archive

Nicole Collins and Ruth del Fresno-Guillem

In 2018 conservator Ruth del Fresno-Guillem and artist Nicole Collins met to begin a series of essential conversations. In late 2019, Collins started a process of de-creation, sharing the process on Instagram: @nicolecollinsartist #crucible2020. Working through her archive, revisiting the remaining works, and re-melting some of her encaustic paintings raised many questions. This led to a weekly online meeting where the conservator and artist would reframe some concepts. The long-term commitment has created synergies to approach care from many perspectives; there is a collaborative decision-making process that lines up with the recent conservation approaches (49<sup>th</sup> AIC conference, CAN/EMG sessions).

This presentation will discuss how a long-term non-institutional, professional relationship can redefine the idea of care from our related but different perspectives and articulate definitions and roles of conservation in the XXI century.

Conservators have learned the importance of using the artist's interview as an essential tool. Having the opportunity to discuss and learn from the artist themselves is an invaluable honour. At this point in the evolution of the field, it has been shown that it is not only to gather technical and practical information but also to question our role in preserving some artworks. We know artists change their minds, but this situation should not be seen as inconvenient (Dominguez Rubio, 2021). Moreover, it could be an opportunity to review and evolve. Artworks are not always static. Based on this embedded mutability, conservators and other art professionals must embrace the possibility of the mortality of the art object. (GCI Conference: The Object in Transition, 2008).

### Biography

In her practice, Nicole Collins focuses on the effect and subsequent affect of time, memory, accumulation, force and heat on visceral and ephemeral materials, through painting, drawing, digital reproduction, installation, intervention, video, and sound. Since 1994 she has exhibited extensively including solo exhibitions at The Art Gallery of Ontario (2013), The University of Waterloo Art Gallery (2013) and The Embassy of Canada in Tokyo (2001) and group exhibitions in Toronto, Hamilton, St. Johns, New York, Miami, London and Zurich. Her work has been featured online and in magazines, newspapers and books including the major survey Abstract Painting in Canada (Roald Nasgaard), the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of A Concise History of Canadian Painting (Dennis Reid), Carte Blanche, Volume 2: Painting, and The Donovan Collection Catalogue. Collins lives in Toronto and is Associate Professor of Material and Visual Culture in the Drawing & Painting program and School of Graduate Studies at the Ontario College of Art & Design University (OCADU).

Dr. Ruth del Fresno-Guillem is a researcher and conservator in private practice who primarily works for private collections and with emerging artists. She is an active advocate for conservation and aims to raise awareness within the emerging artist and art-related community by giving presentations and talks and conducting artist interviews. In 2017, she received her Ph.D. in Science and Restoration of Historical and Artistic Heritage from the Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain. She also has a BA+MA degree in Fine Arts (conservation) and History

With wax as a primary component over a 30+ year studio practice, artist Nicole Collins has engaged with its archival persistence, its malleability and ability to capture a moment in time. These paintings were made to last but have the unique capacity to be de-created using intention and heat. In Collins' context, de-creation ("undoing the creature in us," according to Simone Weil) is a generative act, one that works with existing artworks as materials, transforming them into new forms, shedding some material in the process.

Over 150 paintings were transformed. Melting wax was captured as performance and in sculptural form, the wooden stretchers re-purposed, the stained and battered canvas conserved for future work. In a few cases, the coloured wax persisted, re-incarnated, across decades, staining, stubbornly resisting the process. The resulting paintings were both intentional and unintentional, representing "that which remains" (Schneider, R., 2001; Hölling, H., 2015, p.21). Collins also brings these principles to her studio-based courses on process-based painting and European historical painting techniques at OCAD University in Toronto, exposing next generations of artists to thinking more deeply about the life of the art they create.

In these non-institutional and hence inclusive exchanges, the practice of conservation redefines the figure of the contemporary art conservator becoming a caregiver, facilitator, and collaborator, creating active preventive conservation strategies while committing to raise awareness of the ongoing importance of the practice.

of Art. As a researcher, she has participated in diverse projects involving artist's interviews, the conservation of performance art and ethical approaches to contemporary art. Ruth has participated in many international conferences and symposia. She is involved in VoCA. In January 2020, she interviewed the Cuban American artist Gladys Triana for the CALL/VoCA Talks series. Dr. del Fresno has created an open online database (at [www.ruthdelfresno.com](http://www.ruthdelfresno.com)) under Testimoniart, where the interviews she conducts are published periodically. Lately, Dr. del Fresno focuses her research projects on the preservation of Performance Art protocols and inclusivity approaches. She believes in sharing, learning, and respect as an essential way to approach conservation, art, and life.

## Conservation Practices from the Artist's Studio

Diego Mellado Martínez

New Media Art conservation has involved artists in the conservation of their artwork much deeper than other media, attending to their technical complexity. Conservators have approached the artist through interviews and documentation requests, but it is not that often that conservation of the artworks is a task considered from inside of the studio practice.

Several well-known media artists such as Rafael Lozano-Hemmer or Casey Reas have published their own guidelines or approaches to the topic. Diego Mellado Martínez, engineer and project manager at Studio Daniel Canogar, has been working in the development of a strategy for the artworks developed inside of the studio since 2013. This strategy has evolved from installation manuals to more complex solutions. Conservation is considered from the development and production of the artwork and even integrated into the artwork itself as "self-documentation". This is the case of demo-mode for software- and data-based artworks, as presented in Mellado's master thesis "Documentation as a conservation tool for software-based and data-based works: Engineering approaches from the artist studio". During his research for the mentioned master thesis, Mellado had the chance to better understand the conservation practice from his engineering background.

This presentation will introduce the conservation strategies developed in the studio, their pros and cons, their relation to other artist's strategies and their future development.

### Biography

Diego Mellado Martínez is an engineer for new media arts and a new media arts restoration researcher with a strong focus on technical solutions and documentation models for software-based artworks. Since 2010 he has used his background in communications engineering (MSc degree) to design and produce new media artworks for several artists. Since 2013 he is project manager at Daniel Canogar's studio, where he is in charge of public art commissions. In 2020, he graduated from the MediaArt-Histories MA program with a master thesis on computer-based art conservation. The same year, Diego lectured at the Media Art Preservation Institute at Donau University Krems and presented at several conferences, among them at AIC EMG. After his experience at Daniel Canogar's studio, his interest in new media art conservation and restoration has grown significantly as a work field, applying his knowledge on electronics, mechanics and programming to the repair and maintenance of this kind of artwork. He leads a freelance project called HelpMe!mFamous and is the founder of the Digital Art Drive collection space.



# Shirin Neshat's Passage: Embracing Collaboration and Interrogating Boundaries in Contemporary Art Conservation

Martina Haidvogel and Peter Oleksik

When the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) acquired Shirin Neshat's video installation *Passage* (2001) in 2007, the video arrived on a Digital Betacam tape, however the artist wasn't happy with the way the video material looked. Working closely with the artist to resolve this, it was discovered that the work was initially shot on 35mm film and the conversion from film to standard definition video was the root of this dissatisfaction. 10 years after the museum's acquisition, a cross-institutional project between the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and MoMA was able to resurface the original camera negative of the film. In close collaboration with the artist and her cinematographer, a digitization of the 35mm film led to a new master of the work.

When working with living artists, the boundaries between the artist's and conservators' involvement with a work become blurred. Are we overstepping our professional boundaries when we visit artists in their studios to create the assets we need for preserving the work? Or is a collaborative approach with artists and artworks a necessary way of working in contemporary art conservation? Is this a new role for conservation and is there a point when our interventions are going too far?

Peter Oleksik, media conservator at MoMA, and Martina Haidvogel, lecturer at the Bern University of the Arts media conservation program and former SFMOMA media conservator, will discuss this question using Shirin Neshat's video installation as a point of departure.

## Biography

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Peter Oleksik is Associate Media Conservator at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) where he has been working since 2011 to conserve the museum's vast time-based media collection across curatorial departments. Outside of MoMA, Oleksik regularly writes and teaches various topics within time-based media conservation as well as works with artists, filmmakers and musicians to preserve and provide access to their media collections. Oleksik received his BA in Cinema Studies from the University of Southern California and his MA from New York University's Moving Image Archiving and Preservation (MIAP) program.

# In Conversation

Jill Sterrett and Pip Laurenson

## Biography

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Pip Laurenson is the Head of Collection Care Research at Tate in the UK and holds a special chair as Professor of Art, Collection and Care at the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands. She has over twenty years of experience in the conservation of contemporary art beginning her career in Sculpture Conservation and going on to establish and lead Tate's pioneering Time-based Media Conservation section from 1996 until 2010. In her current role Pip develops, leads and supports research related to the conservation and management of Tate's collections. Pip is committed to interdisciplinary research that serves and responds to art of our time and in exploring what it means for a contemporary art museum to be a research organisation. Pip has secured awards for research from a range of funders including private foundations, the European Union framework programme and the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council. She currently leads the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation initiative Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum. She received her doctorate from University College London, is an accredited member of the Institute for Conservation, a trustee of the UK's National Science and Heritage Forum, and is a member of the Steering Committee of the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA).

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Jill Sterrett is an arts and cultural advisor. She was Interim Director and Deputy Director at the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago (2018–2020) and Director of Collections and

Art Conservator at the San Francisco Museum of Art (1990–2018). She is engaged in ways to revitalize museums for our times and plays an active role in Voices in Contemporary Art, an international consortium of conservators, curators, collectors, educators, and students who recognize the need for new forms of collaboration. She has lived and practiced on four continents and believes this business of objects has always been about people.